(vi) Allowing foreign equity participation upto 100%, through automatic route, in the textile sector with certain exceptions.

(vii) To prepare and sensitise our textile and garment industry to conform to the ecological requirement of importing countries by providing facilities by way of eco-testing laboratories.

(viii) National Institute for Fashion Technology (NIFT), and its six branches and Apparel Training & Design Centres (ATDCs) are running various courses/programmes to meet skilled manpower requirements of textile industry in the field of design, merchandising and marketing.

(ix) The New Exporters' Entitlement (Quota) Policy announced for the period 2000-2004 announced recently to provide stability and continuity and encourage competitiveness in textile exports.

(c) The Textile Export Promotion Councils are regularly undertaking various programmes to promote exports of textiles, which include participation in trade fairs/exhibitions, conducting buyer-seller meets, market studies and sending high level trade delegations.

Modernisation of NTC Mills

2905. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have prepared any plan for modernisation of NTC mills all over India;

(b) if so, the region-wise details of such mills;

(c) the number of such mills located in Eastern India;

(d) the reasons for not taking up modernisation plans in respect of remaining mills;

(e) the steps proposed to be taken for revival of NTC mills specially in Eastern India; and

(f) what steps have been taken/proposed to be taken to ensure that work-force employed in these mills are not rendered jobless?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN) : (a) to (f) The NTC Mills in Eastern India are managed by NTC (WBAB & O) Ltd., Calcutta, a subsidiary of NTC Ltd.

The subsidiary has 16 mills under it. Due to net worth erosion NTC (WBAB&O) was referred to BIFR on 15-1-1993 and declared sick on 8-7-1993. The BIFR had formed a *prima-facie* opinion for winding up the company and had issued a show cause notice to this effect.

On the basis of a viability study made by NTC, Government is considering a revised turn around plan for the viable subsidiaries of NTC alongwith the viable mills under them keeping in view the BIFR norms of net worth of these mills turning positive within the period prescribed by BIFR. The interest of the workers will be kept in mind.

Closure of Jute Purchasing Centres in Tripura

2906. SHRI KHAGEN DAS : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to State :

(a) whether JCI has closed down three jute purchasing centres in Tripura;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) what was the volume of jute purchase from the growers of Tripura by the JCI during 1996-97, 1997-98 and 1998-99; and

(d) what percentage of the total produce of jute in the State was purchased by JCI during the said period and what was the time gap between the growers readying the crop for sale and the approach of JCI for purchase ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN) : (a) and (b) Yes Sir.

In order to make JCI more cost effective, a restructuring programme of JCI centres in all the jute growing States was undertaken on an objective basis and after several rounds of discussions with all concerned, it was decided to close down 3 purchase centres in the State of Tripura viz. Khowai DPC, Mohanpur sub-centre and Bishramganj sub-centre along-with other 34 uneconomic centres based on their past performances. On the other hand it was decided to upgrade the existing Kalyanpur sub-centre to a full-fledged Departmental Purchase Centres for augmenting its purchase capacity.

(c) and (d) During the period from 1996-97 to 1999-2000, the JCI was called upon to undertake price support operation only in 1997-98 in Tripura during which a total volume of 5,400 bales of raw jute was purchased under